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DE RUEHDS #2982/01 3561454
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7235
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE
RUEPADJ/CJTF HOA
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 002982

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: DEATH SENTENCES FOR FIVE GINBOT 7 DEFENDANTS

REF: ADDIS ABABA 02916

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DISTRIBUTION.

11. (U) In a packed courtroom on December 22, Ethiopia's Federal High Court sentenced 40 Ginbot 7 defendants (reftel). The Court sentenced five defendants to death, 33 defendants to life terms, and two defendants to 10 years. The charges in which the defendants were convicted included: conspiracy against the constitutional system; conspiracy to destroy government institutions; attempted assassination of government officials; and inciting rebellion within the army. The defendants showed little emotion as the sentences were read aloud, while relatives openly cried. The presiding judge Adem Ibrahim explained that the court rejected the prosecutor's request to sentence all defendants to death (except the two who pleaded guilty, stating that the death sentence is reserved for dangerous criminals only. The Court handed down the death sentence to the convicted political leaders of the plot (including Dr. Berhanu Nega) and those who were sentenced in the past for criminal acts. Lawyers for the defendants have the option to appeal these sentences to the Supreme Court.

12. (U) Many defendants previously petitioned the Court for sentence leniency based on their long years of service to their country, family status, lack of previous criminal record, and poor health condition. The Court said it rejected the Prosecutor's request to confiscate properties of three defendants (Brigadier General Teferra Mamo, Asamnew Tsige, and Tsige Habtemaryam). The Court did rule to confiscate the properties of Dr. Berhanu Nega, Getu Worku, Alehubel Amare, Andargachew Tsige, and Yaregal Yimam, all whom were convicted in absentia. The Court stated this decision would not affect any property owned by their spouses.

13. (SBU) PolAsst as well as representatives from the German and Canadian embassies attended the sentencing hearing alongside international and local journalists.

14. (U) The complete list of names of those convicted and their sentences are as follows:

Death sentence (5 defendants):

- Melaku Teferra
- Dr. Berhanu Nega (charged in abstentia)
- Muluneh Eyoel (charged in abstentia)
- Andargachew Tsige (charged in abstentia)
- Mesfin Aman (charged in abstentia)

Life sentence (33 defendants):

- Alehubel Amare (charged in abstentia)
- Yaregal Yimam (charged in abstentia)

--Dan (full name not available; charged in abstentia)
--Aweke Afework (charged in abstentia)
--Dereje Habtewold (charged in abstentia)
--Daniel Assefa (charged in abstentia)
--Chekol Getahun (charged in abstentia)
--Efrem Madebo (charged in abstentia)
--Fasil Yenealem (charged in abstentia)
--Brigadier General Teferra Mamo
--Asamnew Tsige
--Tsige Habtemaryam
--Ato Mengistu Abebe
--Lt. Col. Solomon Ashagre
--Lt. Col. Alemu Getenet
--Major Mesekere Kassa
--Lt. Col. Getachew Berele
--Captain Temesgen Bayleyegn
--Getu Worku
--Lt. Col. Fantahun Muhaba
--Lt. Col. Abere Asefa
--Major Misganaw Tessema
--Ato Yeshiwas Mengesha
--Emawayish Alemu
--Lt. Col. Demsew Anteneh
--Yeshiwas Mitiku
--Gobena Belay
--Amerar Bayabil
--Ato Goshirad Tsegaw
--Wudneh Temesgen
--Yibeltal Birhanu
--Major Mekonen Worku
--Ato Kifle Sinshaw

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Ten years rigorous imprisonment and deprivation of civil rights for
four years for those who pleaded guilty (2 defendants):

--Major Adugna Alemayehu
--Major Adefris Asaminew

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